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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 5, 2012, at 12 p.m.

## Senate

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2012

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DANIEL K. AKAKA, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, sustain America with Your providential protection as You inspire us to cultivate faith, hope, and love. Bless our lawmakers, using them to make a positive difference in the lives of those in need. Touch our Senators with Your love and peace, as Your will is done in the Senate and in all the offices and homes represented here. Purge our hearts of anything that doesn't honor You.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable DANIEL K. AKAKA led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, March 2, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL K. AKAKA, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. AKAKA thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader of the Senate is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am very happy to see you here this morning. It is not often that we get our senior Members to preside, and we appreciate it very much.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following any leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill. Today we will continue to work with Republicans and hopefully find a path forward. There will be no rollcall votes today. The next vote will occur Tuesday morning.

### SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this is a new year, and thankfully it has brought new signs of economic recovery—not as vibrant as we would like

but some recovery—but it will never be good enough while we have millions of Americans unemployed in this country. As we say in the Senate, those on this side of the aisle, Democrats, we are not going to take our eye off the target; that is, a healthy economy. The bipartisan Transportation bill before the Senate is an important step in that direction. This bill will save or create almost 3 million jobs. Yet my Republican colleagues have caused the waste of about a month of precious time here on the Senate floor in obstructing this very important piece of legislation. So it is with disappointment that I am going to file cloture on this Transportation bill.

It seems 85 votes to begin debate on a measure no longer indicates a smooth legislative path forward. We would think that with 85 votes, we would have timely approval of the bill, but that has not taken place. That is because my Republican colleagues want to waste time on unrelated, ideological, nongermane, nonrelevant amendments instead of talking about the Nation's failing infrastructure.

There is no one, no one thinks—and I say that—no one believes that our roads, our highways, our bridges are up to snuff. They are not. We need significant work to bring them to a better condition. Tens of thousands of bridges are in a state of disrepair. So Republicans, instead of working on this valuable infrastructure bill, have been causing us to waste time on unrelated issues.

We have spent the last several weeks on women's access to health care, and,

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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